

**An Annotated Bibliography of Academic and Other Literature
on Christian Science**

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Observation, invention, study, and
original thought are expansive.

Mary Baker Eddy

Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures

INTRODUCTION

For many decades, scholars have requested better access to information on the Christian Science movement and its history. In 1948, Henry Steiger remarked, “Even if we expect a scholar to pass correct judgment on a subject within his field of investigation, we cannot expect him to gather this information without assistance. The Christian Science movement cannot expect fair treatment of its doctrine unless from its own ranks efforts are made to lay the necessary groundwork.”¹ Thirty-four years later, Martin Marty tried again: “Until Christian Science leaders open their archives, they will have to content themselves with speculative works of this sort.”²

Finally, in 2002, over ninety years after the (1910) death of Mary Baker Eddy, the leader of the Christian Science movement, the Archives of the Christian Science Church were made available to the public with the opening of The Mary Baker Eddy Library.

And yet again, about five years ago, Dr. J. Gordon Melton, Distinguished Professor of American Religious History of the Institute for Studies of Religion at Baylor University, suggested to us that it was still difficult to find a broad range of academic research and resource material on the history of Christian Science. “Biographies on Mary Baker Eddy are plentiful,” he said. “But the history of Christian Science is still obscure and difficult to track down. An annotated bibliography would enable scholars to find appropriate resources for their research, and this scholarly research would accomplish much toward a better understanding of this important religious movement.”

We can’t presume to know how Mary Baker Eddy would have wanted to celebrate her bicentennial. But 2021 is her bicentennial year. She publicly proclaimed, “This is the natal hour of my lone earth life...”³ Privately, she wrote to one student, “This is my birthday, a day of such moment to the race.”⁴ And to another, on another occasion, she wrote, “This is my birthday according to the calendar of error.”⁵ There has always been more than one side to her story and her Church, even according to her own reckoning.

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This *Annotated Bibliography* bookmarks 200 years since Eddy's birth. It is our contribution to the ongoing effort to understand the multiple dimensions of the life of Mary Baker Eddy and her Church. It presents a large index of literature in a central location to help jumpstart scholarly research.

Furthermore, the investigation of the meaning of the religious, historical, and cultural location of a religious leader (and movement) is, as Bruno Latour notes, "much better *after* having let the actors [Eddy] deploy the full range of controversies in which they are [she is] immersed." He continues outlining the more profitable method of "tracing connections *between* the controversies themselves rather than try to decide how to settle any given controversy."⁶ This *Annotated Bibliography* aids scholars in tracing those connections.

Compilers and Annotators

The three compilers and primary annotators are:

Shirley Paulson, PhD in Religion and Theology at the University of Birmingham (UK), worked for The First Church of Christ, Scientist, Boston, MA in the capacities of Regional Monitor Circulation Manager, Committee on Publication for Illinois, Board of Lectureship, Head of Ecumenical Affairs, and Christian Science practitioner. She has published book chapters and articles in academic journals, and a book is forthcoming in 2021.

Linda Bargmann, Christian Science researcher, is a retired Certified Public Accountant who has been involved with Bible study organizations for Christian Scientists for 30 years. She has researched early Christian Science history since The Mary Baker Eddy Library opened, giving presentations on the culture of the Christian Science movement to Christian Science churches across the country. Her collection of about 2,000 books provided a foundation for this *Annotated Bibliography*.

Helen Mathis, MA, Biblical Studies and Christian History, Pacific School of Religion (part of the Graduate Theological Union in Berkeley, CA), spent three years as Director for the Center for Scriptural Studies in Manchester Center, VT followed by three years teaching religion at Principia College. She was also the managing editor of a Bible study curriculum project and has actively presented Bible workshops around the country for the past 20 years.

All three of us grew up within the Christian Science community and knew the blessings of Christian Science through our individual healing experiences. We have committed much of our lives to serving the cause of Christian Science. We have also faced disappointments and challenges in our work with the culture associated with the Church, which was sometimes more insular than ecumenical, more eager to give advice than to receive it. Even though the three of us have broad backgrounds and experiences, what we read for this project surprised and changed us. For this reason, we are convinced that the literature on Christian Science we have annotated will be beneficial and insightful not only to scholars, but to Christian Scientists themselves. For the past five years we worked steadily together to complete the project.

It was good to work as a team because we needed to challenge each other and help each other with points of difficult history we had not known before. We finished our work on this book with:

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- a greater appreciation for the struggles Mary Baker Eddy faced in the context of her nineteenth-century life;
- a better understanding of the challenges facing the first leaders of the Church after Eddy's death;
- a greater realization of the impact of the so-called 'Great Litigation' on subsequent Church history;
- a retrospective view of the courage, as well as the apparent mistakes, of the Christian Science Board of Directors;
- a detection of a major shift for the better in scholarship and types of research that occurred with the opening of The Mary Baker Eddy Library; and
- a greater awareness of the struggles with and among the so-called 'Independent' Christian Scientists who represented ideas about Christian Science that did not comply with the official interpretation from the Board of Directors.

When Dr. Melton mentioned that it would help religion scholars to have access to an annotated bibliography on Christian Science, it was the three of us who understood immediately why it was true. Shirley Paulson in particular had represented the Christian Science Church in a number of public venues, and had studied religion in the field of New Religious Movements. These experiences made her acutely aware of how difficult it can be for scholars to find available materials.

We have reviewed and annotated the majority of published books and articles on Mary Baker Eddy and Christian Science that we believe would be most useful for researchers. Some of the material we have discovered is outstanding, especially that published by various scholars having access to The Mary Baker Eddy Library. We are delighted to make this material better known to scholars and to the general public, as it covers new topics, such as the rhetoric of Eddy's teachings and writings, music in the churches, and some feminist and philosophical perspectives.

Contributors

We are exceedingly grateful for the many individuals who provided one or more annotations from their areas of expertise:

Bonnie Abiko, PhD	William Marquand, AIA
Richard Davenport, MTS	Madelon Maupin, MTS
Alan Galt, PhD	Keith McNeil
Michael Hamilton, PhD	Mark Montgomery, MA
Barry Huff, PhD	Carolyn Petersen
Susan E. Humble, PhD	Stan Scott, PhD
Susan Jostyn, MTS	Philip Smith, PhD
Julia Lunn	

We deeply appreciate Sharon-Lee (Sher) Orpen for bringing her expertise, patience, and perseverance to the very complex work of formatting, organizing, and editing the extensive material in the *Bibliography*. We would also like to offer special thanks to colleagues who helped us proofread and search for consistency in the almost 400 pages of the *Bibliography*. Alan Galt, Jean Perkins, and Christine Negley read and re-read multiple drafts, and if some errors or missing or extraneous punctuation marks persist, it is through no fault of theirs.

Rumors, Myths, and Controversial Literature

The history of antagonism toward Christian Science and the paucity of primary source material have exacerbated rumor-spreading and myth-making tendencies. Two major examples of rumors addressed by the sources in this bibliography include that Eddy was a plagiarist, and that Phineas P. Quimby was the real founder of Christian Science.

Eddy and her movement have also attracted a surplus of unfriendly literature that scholars have encountered and used as source material, which has influenced the public discourse on Christian Science. This literature is included in this *Annotated Bibliography* with a representative number of the harsher works classified as ‘polemical.’ Consulting this *Annotated Bibliography* will allow scholars to find more information on these and discover other sources that can broaden their research.

How the Bibliography is Organized

Most of the more recent literature on Christian Science covers a broad range of topics, so we have created some distinct categories, described below. Naturally, considerable overlap exists between these categories, so they are cross-referenced in the book’s index in the categories where they apply. One of the goals of this bibliography is to provide resource material by scholars and for scholars—by providing a path linking sources on the same topic.

Here is a brief overview of each category.

The Bible, Religion, Philosophy, Theology, and Science

Since ‘Science’—as understood in Christian Science—is a theological term, it belongs in this category, which includes writings focused on the theological meaning and practice of Christian Science in conversation with biblical studies, philosophies, theologies, and the physical sciences from Eddy’s day until now.

Biographies and Chronologies

Numerous biographies of Mary Baker Eddy and other workers in the movement have been written throughout the history of Christian Science, and, with few exceptions until The Mary Baker Eddy Library opened, these studies were based on secondary sources (at best) or speculation. (Two notable exceptions were Lyman Powell’s biography of 1930 and Robert Peel’s trilogy of 1966, 1971, and 1977.) A sampling of the most influential or significant biographies has been included in this *Annotated Bibliography* to give researchers historical context.

Christian Science After 1910

After Eddy’s death in 1910, Church leaders relied on her writings, especially her *Church Manual*, to guide them. Controversy over interpretations of the *Church Manual* erupted in the beginning of the second decade. The history of the Church since 1910 demonstrates its effort to balance the new needs of each passing generation with the continuity of its core teachings.

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Church Building, Governance, and Legal Issues

This category consists mostly of historical records of the building of The First Church of Christ, Scientist, in Boston, MA (The Mother Church) and branches in various parts of the world. Some of the resources include metaphysical and philosophical considerations for the building of the churches and their polity.

Feminist Perspectives

This research utilizes the tools of feminist scholarship and analysis to examine the life of Eddy and the Christian Science movement. These perspectives provide a rich backdrop for studying the various influences on Eddy and the movement, as well as how the movement in return impacted gender studies and issues.

Focus on Healing

Eddy's evolution as a healer took place within a historical context in which there were many healing practices competing with Christian Science: mind cure, Spiritualism, Transcendentalism, Swedenborgianism, and theosophy—to name a few. As one among many, Eddy strove mightily to distinguish her Christian Science. The profusion of scholarship on the subject of healing and healthcare during the nineteenth- and twentieth-century period includes social and religious contexts, such as the tendency for men to subsume the private healing practices of women.

Research on the legal, constitutional, and philosophical aspects of Christian Science healing practices extends well into modern times. The articles included in this category relating to the legal and medical issues around spiritual healing without medicine are representative of the evolution of this debate. For a comprehensively researched and referenced work on the profound legal, religious, and moral questions surrounding this topic, we recommend the 67-page article by Elena Kondos, "The Law and Christian Science Healing for Children: A Pathfinder."

Independents

There has always been tension within the Church between the need to conserve the integrity of Eddy's vision and the wish to provide creative space for its members to innovate—to offer alternative interpretations of the Bible and Eddy's writings, for example. Those categorized as 'Independents' sincerely found value in Christian Science but then felt a need to keep moving in ways that did not fit with the specific trajectory of the Christian Science Church. Eddy herself felt that tension. She was keenly protective of her life's work, but also acknowledged the value of independent thinkers and writers. Seeking to strike a balance she reasoned: "We would not deny their authors a hearing, since the Scripture declares, 'He that is not against us is on our part.' And we should also speak in loving terms of their efforts, but we cannot afford to recommend any literature as wholly Christian Science which is not absolutely genuine."⁷

Some of these independents were prolific in their writings illustrating how broadly Christian Science has influenced thinkers, healers, and religious communities, especially in the English-speaking world. We have not listed all the publications of each individual, but rather a representative sample of them. To find more of these independents' works, the researcher might find helpful these websites as a guide:

<https://thebookmark.com/>,

<https://plainfieldcs.com/>, and

<https://mulberrypress.com/>

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Polemic Literature

Ever since Mary Baker Glover began to write and teach the discovery of what she termed the Science of Christ in the mid-nineteenth century, her words and works have been controversial. The writings of antagonists and the response to them comprise part of the history of Christian Science. Most of the polemic literature is incorporated into the other annotation categories, but this section is where the compilers have set aside a sampling of the more angry and provocative opposition to Eddy and her Church. These annotations are followed by a few examples of responses to some of the polemical views. The opening of the Mary Baker Eddy Library in 2002 and this *Annotated Bibliography* make available a broader view of sourced scholarship to enable the researcher the fullest access to information about Mary Baker Eddy and Christian Science.

Social and Cultural Studies

These books and articles analyze how Mary Baker Eddy, individual Christian Scientists, and the Church have interfaced with the evolution of culture and society. The works in this category help the scholar to appreciate how Eddy and her Church have influenced and been influenced by society, and to consider why there was thought open to what Eddy had to offer as well as heated resistance. These topics range from social upheaval to homosexuality to climate change.

Primary Resources

Three important resources available to both scholars and the general public merit special mention.

1. Christian Science religious periodicals

The monthly *Christian Science Journal*, the weekly *Christian Science Sentinel*, and the *Christian Science Herald* (non-English publications) are the Church religious periodicals consisting of articles, testimonials, and editorials written by Christian Scientists on the meaning of their faith and how they practice it in everyday life. Testimonies of healing through the practice of Christian Science, which have been verified, appear in each issue. The *Journal* also provides a directory of churches, practitioners, Christian Science nurses, Christian Science college and university organizations, and Committees on Publication throughout the world. From the very beginning of the CS Church, these periodicals have offered an in-house view of the way Christian Scientists have thought and practiced their faith.

Of special note for researchers is the digital search function on <https://jsh.christianscience.com/console>, which includes several recent biographies on Mary Baker Eddy, as well as all the content in the periodicals.

2. The Longyear Museum

Longyear Museum opened to the public in 1937 and was originally housed in the Brookline, Massachusetts, mansion of its founder, Mary Beecher Longyear (1851–1931). In 2001, Longyear opened a new purpose-built museum in Chestnut Hill, Massachusetts. The Museum's collection includes documents, artifacts, artwork, and more pertaining to Mary Baker Eddy and those who assisted her in establishing Christian Science.

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Its collection of Baker family material is among its most unique holdings. The Museum also owns eight historic houses in Massachusetts and New Hampshire in which Mary Baker Eddy lived at various times between 1855 and 1910. The houses are open to the public. Before The Mary Baker Eddy Library opened in 2002, this Museum was the most important collection of primary sources available to the public. In addition to operating the museum and historic houses, Longyear continues to publish books and monographs on the history of Mary Baker Eddy and the early Christian Science movement.

3. *The Mary Baker Eddy Library*

The Mary Baker Eddy Library (originally The Mary Baker Eddy Library for the Betterment of Humanity) opened its doors to Christian Scientists, scholars, and the press during the Annual Meeting of The Mother Church in 2002. Church archives, including Eddy's unpublished sermons, letters, and Church records, were finally opened to the public. The Library now publishes much of its material online and develops programs for the public.

One main purpose of the Library is to assist scholarly research on Eddy and the history of the Christian Science movement. Besides a fellowship program that opened in 2003, the Library has organized for the public a number of collections specific not only to Mary Baker Eddy, but to other prominent persons impacting the movement. Go to:

<https://www.marybakereddylibrary.org/research/finding-aids/> to find manuscripts, letters, diaries, articles, photographs and other materials in, for example:

- the Mary Baker Eddy and Calvin Frye Diary collection
- the Georgine Milmine collection
- the Calvin and Frances Thompson Hill Collection—which includes written and audio material by and about early Christian Scientists

One of the difficulties facing the Christian Science Board of Directors that possibly postponed the opening of the Church archives for public viewing was addressing a question that arose since the time of Eddy's passing: was it better to bring to light Eddy's human struggles or to present a more refined expression of her mature development? As one biographer of Eddy explains: "Her letters reveal her moments of loneliness—the inevitable loneliness of the pioneer—her longing for the normal family ties she never had after childhood and adolescence, even her occasional sadness. All of these characteristics were part of the same woman who, through a growing sense of spiritual dominion, was able to lead a global religious movement. They only demonstrate that she was a fully human being."⁸ Perhaps Eddy's own statement reveals what it took to achieve that more mature development: "Millions may know that I am the Founder of Christian Science. I alone know what that means."⁹

Unsurprisingly, the compilers, in reading the literature included in this *Annotated Bibliography*, noted a marked shift in the character of scholarly research since the opening of the Library, and we anticipate the development of yet another level of scholarship when scholars make use of the greater accessibility afforded by this *Annotated Bibliography*.

Endnotes:

¹ Henry W. Steiger, *Christian Science and Philosophy*. (Philosophical Library, 1948), 11.

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² Martin Marty, "Mary Baker Eddy: An Interpretive Biography of the Founder of Christian Science by Julius Silberger," *The Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 12, no. 4 (1982), 740.

³ Mary Baker Eddy, *The First Church of Christ, Scientist and Miscellany* (The Christian Science Board of Directors, 1913), 158. (From July 16, 1903 corner-stone at Concord).

⁴ *In My True Light and Life: Mary Baker Eddy Collections* (Boston: The Writings of Mary Baker Eddy, 2002), 428.

⁵ 7/16/1887 Eddy to Edward A. Bailey re. "your most excellent article 'Intelligent Religion'" (Mary Baker Eddy Library Collection), V03480.

⁶ Bruno Latour, *Reassembling the Social: An Introduction to Actor-Network-Theory* (Oxford University Press, 2005), 23.

⁷ Eddy, *Miscellany*, 224.

⁸ Richard A. Nenneman, *Persistent Pilgrim: The Life of Mary Baker Eddy* (Etna, NH: Neggadon Press, 1997), xii.

⁹ Eddy, *Miscellany*, 249.